President's Report 1981-82

CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT - 1981/82

Despite some achievements, 1981-82 was not as successful a year as we had hoped.

After launching our major environmental project in early 1980-81 we were looking forward to the report on the Central Queensland Environment Study (C.Q.E.S.) twelve months ago. We have finally been given advice from our consultant that the report will be available by September 1982. C.C.C. should be sure not to forget the lesson to be learnt from this exercise, in that future projects of this nature should be covered by a fully detailed written contract. The conditions of employment of consultants should not be left to verbal gentleman's agreement.

Fundraising is still our biggest problem. C.C.C. certainly needs some new fundraising initiatives but the only schemes suggested are those which require more manpower than we have available. The one hopeful solution is the soliciting of further donations towards extension of the C.Q.E.S.

It is significant to note the advice given by Grahame Wells at his last meeting with C.C.C. That is that this first stage of the C.Q.E.S. will mainly result in the updating of our knowledge and records of nature conservation areas in the region and associated problems. If this information is not continually kept up to date from now on, we will have to go through the whole exercise again in the future. It is important that C.C.C. members themselves take on this task and closely monitor any changes in land use patterns and needs, and initiate appropriate action through the normal course of C.C.C. business.

The next stage of the C.Q.E.S. should investigate some broader aspects of our environmental problems.

One of the most successful areas of the 81-82 year has been the re-cataloguing of the Jock McCabe Memorial Library. Many thanks must go to Anne Meehan for the hundreds of hours of work she has put into that massive task. The job is not yet finished and we need volunteer typists to help in the preparations of stencils for library cards.

It has been difficult operating the Environment Centre this year without a regular secretary. However, without Esther as Treasurer and part-time secretary C.C.C. would have ceased to function altogether. We thank Esther for her constant efforts.

Also we wish to thank Norm Gibson for his hard work in the Gladstone area in the early part of the year. We are sorry he is not able to continue actively as our Port Curtis Project Officer due to personal and health reasons.

One of our achievements this year has been the publication of our newsletter "The Topic of Capricorn." Six issues have been produced and we hope to continue publishing bi-monthly. I believe that the newsletter is a most effective way of keeping members informed on environmental events of interest to this region.

C.C.C. publicly opposed the establishment of a commercial tourist venture on North-West Island, which is an existing National Park, and then congratulated the Government on finally deciding to reject this proposal.

One of our areas of concern during the year has been the proposal for a National Park on Mt Archer.

In November 1981 three members of C.C.C. met the Minister for National Parks,

Tony Elliott, and discussed with him the general lack of National Parks in the Central Queensland region. At this meeting we also presented him with a map of what we would recommend as a National Park. Since then we have corresponded with both National Parks and Mines Department on the status of Authorities to Prospect over the Berserker Ranges.

The destruction of Mt Etna is our biggest disappointment. During the years 1979 to 1981 mining mainly occurred on the far side of the mountains and the cavernous north face appeared to be having a respite, while we argued with the Australian Heritage Commission on how the caves were to be listed on the Register of the National Estate. With this fruitless argument still unsolved, the mining company has now moved back to the north face and several beautiful irreplacable caves have been mined.

It seems that nothing can stop the destruction of Bat Cleft and the whole of Mt Etna by this Government sanctioned vandalism.

A big surprise, on a positive note, has been the formation of the PEOPLE FOR PEACE group in Rockhampton. We hope that their membership continues to grow and that in conjunction with the Campaign Against Nuclear Power local branch, we succeed in declaring Rockhampton a Nuclear Free Zone.

Running the Environment Centre involves not only debating and deciding upon Environmental issues, but also a fair amount of menial work such as filing papers, etc. Every Thursday evening we endeavour to open the Environment Centre for an executive meeting-cum-working bee. All C.C.C. members are welcome to attend. We usually have a fairly enjoyable evening but don't always have the opportunity to discuss some heavy environmental subject, so please don't get offended if its your turn to do the collating or to lick the envelopes. As you all well know, the running of a voluntary organisation depends upon everyone chipping in and not leaving all the work to a few.

Serious thought should be given to introducing the scheme whereby individual members or sub-committees of C.C.C. become familiar with separate topics of environmental interest. These people then are responsible for researching that topic and, through the C.C.C. Executive, can provide up to date information to the media when required.

I think we have a great future ahead of us and I am sure that the C.C.C. can continue to grow and be an effective body helping to protect our environment.

IAN HERBERT
PRESIDENT
20/9/82.